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Proposed Elements of USG Strategy for Bringing Long-Term Stability to Rwanda

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*The Need for a Long-Term Strategy:* At the August 9, interagency Ad Hoc Meeting on Rwanda and Burundi chaired by the NSC, participants briefly discussed elements of a long-term strategy for enhancing political stability in Rwanda and the region. *This strategy would supplement, not replace, the important diplomatic and development efforts the USG has already taken in Rwanda,* which include but are not limited to support for the War Crimes Tribunal, assistance to the GOR, particularly for administration of justice activities, support for UNAMIR, humanitarian assistance, military training etc.

In addition to these efforts, however, it is necessary for the international community and the Rwandan government to agree on an over-arching strategy to bring lasting peace/stability to Rwanda and the region. Doing so entails active support for the GOR so long as it pursues policies of peace and national reconciliation as well as pro-active efforts to address the destabilizing refugee problem by creating a climate conducive to refugee return and energizing the international community to prosecute swiftly the several hundred genocide ring-leaders.

Key elements of a long-term strategy are summarized below.

*Recent Developments – A Window of Opportunity?:* In the time that has elapsed since the August 9 meeting, there have been a number of important developments. The first element of the strategy below – lifting the Rwandan arms embargo – has been accomplished. More recently, Zaire has begun to implement its threat to forcibly return all Rwandan and Burundian refugees as a consequence of the UNSC decision to suspend the arms embargo. Already, we have reports that thousands of refugees are fleeing or being forced both towards the Rwandan border and further into the interior of Zaire. If not stemmed quickly or managed effectively, this situation has the potential to become extremely violent and result in a humanitarian crisis culminating significant loss of life.

Most elements of the strategy outlined below have not yet been pursued by the USG, although we appear to have a unique window of opportunity to do so, given the USG's enhanced credibility with the GOR following our leadership role in lifting the arms embargo and the dangers inherent in forced repatriation of Rwandan refugees from Zaire.

#### LONG-TERM STRATEGY

It is proposed that the U.S. begin immediately to lobby the Government of Rwanda, other countries in the region and concerned donors as appropriate with the aim of implementing the strategy outlined below:

a) Lift arms embargo with conditions to deter arms transfers to Burundi. [Status: Accomplished August 16, 1995.]

b) Create a Climate in Rwanda Conducive to Safe Refugee Repatriation.

-- Urge GOR to issue swiftly a blanket amnesty for all those refugees outside Rwanda except known military/militia leaders and key alleged war criminals. (NB: Any future Rwandan amnesty would not affect the jurisdiction of the War Crimes Tribunal established by the Security Council nor our obligation to deport alleged war criminals to stand trial before the Tribunal.)

- Urge GOR to work with UNHCR/ICRC to screen returning refugees in orderly process at the border. UNHCR should provide repatriation package.
- GOR, with UNAMIR support, should guarantee safe passage for refugees as they return to their communes
- International assistance should be directed in part to building additional housing for returning refugees and adjudicating property disputes. U.S. assistance would continue to be directed primarily to capacity-building and administration of justice activities.

In pursuing a general amnesty, the GOR will have taken an important step toward solving the refugee problem. While repatriation is certain to be slow and partial, by announcing an amnesty, the GOR can assume the moral high-ground, reduce tensions with neighboring countries, and demonstrate clearly to international donors that it is serious about reconciliation.

-- Encourage GOR to name 400+ most heinous genocide perpetrators and issue warrants for their arrest. If the GOR and the international community are ever to prosecute war criminals effectively and move forward with national reconciliation, we must focus our prosecutorial efforts on the ringleaders and allow a return to normalcy for the remaining refugees/prisoners. The GOR has a list of approximately 400 ringleaders. The War Crimes Tribunal reportedly has a similar list. These individuals should be the focus of international efforts. To pursue this approach credibly and effectively, the international community must demonstrate swiftly and surely its readiness to bring the ringleaders to justice. This will require:

- The U.S. and other countries making a concerted effort worldwide to apprehend perpetrators by surprise.
- The U.S. and others reiterating their commitment to capture, deport/detain all 400+ and begin by widely publicizing names and suspected whereabouts of key genocide perpetrators. This must be part of an aggressive international campaign (w/newspaper ads, etc.) to shame countries harboring war criminals to turn them over. For our part, the U.S. would deport suspected criminals in U.S. to the Hague or Rwanda as appropriate.
- International community/UN must do all possible to expedite work of War Crimes Tribunal.

c) Press UNHCR to endorse efforts by GOR to encourage refugee return (assuming this occurs) and announce that within six months UNHCR will close existing refugee camps in Zaire, Burundi and Tanzania.

*-- Refugees would be encouraged but not compelled to return under UN or other international escort.*

*-- Those that wish to remain would have two options: 1) resettlement on a more permanent basis inside the country of first asylum, or, 2) move to new, presumably smaller UNHCR camps constructed further away from the border. Both these steps will require the consent of the asylum countries, which will be difficult to obtain. However, if coupled with a GOR general amnesty and serious efforts to encourage refugee return, host governments may be persuaded to assent.*

*-- These steps would be taken in conjunction with efforts to create a climate conducive to repatriation to Rwanda.*

**d) Improve Prison Conditions.** The USG has made plain to the GOR our strong concern about the horrid prison conditions in which more than 50,000 are being held. While providing tents to ease prison crowding, the USG must increase pressure on the GOR to release from prison all but the key suspected genocide perpetrators and improve living conditions for those that remain. The USG approach should include the elements outlined in the State paper (attached).

**e) Intensify support for current government via "tough love" campaign.**

The international community needs to make plain both the benefits of cooperation on the elements above and the consequences of failure to move forward. If Rwanda pursues the steps above, the U.S. ought to push its allies to recognize these accomplishments in a tangible way and reward the Rwandan leadership directly. Rewards might include the following, in addition to rapid release of pledged assistance and other direct support to the GOR:

- France initiates bilateral assistance to the GOR*
- Europeans invite senior GOR leaders for official visits*
- U.S. receives Rwandan leaders at the White House*

On the other hand, we have to make plain to Rwandan leaders that if the GOR fails to move forward on the key issues above, we will have reassess of policy of continued strong support for the GOR.

**f) Consider enlisting help from Mobutu.** [Status: State is preparing paper on possible role for Mobutu in resolving the regional crisis.]

Mobutu might be enlisted to take immediate steps to halt involuntary refugee repatriation, curtail arms flows in Zaire, allow stationing of monitors at key airports in eastern Zaire and movement of refugee camps inland, use his forces to disarm/close ex-FAR camps in Zaire, put forces on border to prevent/deter ex-FAR incursions. In exchange, we may have to agree to help fund Zairian forces through UNHCR and provide Mobutu with a degree of international recognition. These

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efforts should not be divorced from our principal goal of pushing Mobutu towards a serious democratic transition in Zaire.

President Carter has initiated a dialogue with Mobutu on his own. The USG must decide whether we believe it worthwhile to engage Mobutu at all on these issues and, if so, whether we want to do so directly or work in conjunction with Carter.

Progress on the above items need not be stalled while the USG resolves the broader issue of whether and how to engage Mobutu.

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